

**EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT**  
**ROUTING SLIP**

TO:

		ACTION	INFO	DATE	INITIAL
1	DCI		X		
2	DDCI		X		
3	EXDIR				
4	D/ICS				
5	DDI				
6	DDA				
7	DDO				
8	DDS&T				
9	Chm/NIC				
10	GC				
11	IG				
12	Compt				
13	D/Pers				
14	D/OLL				
15	D/PAO	X			
16	SA/IA				
17	AO/DCI				
18	C/IPD/OIS				
19	NIO				
20					
21					
22					
SUSPENSE		Date			

Remarks

For direct response with information copy  
for DCI.

STAT

19 Mar 85

Date

3637 (10-81)

## The News and Courier

ARTHUR M. WILCOX, Editor  
ROBERT J. COX, Assistant Editor  
RUSSELL F. HARNEY, Associate Editor

BARBARA S. WILLIAMS, Editor  
W.D. CHAMBERLAIN, Assistant Editor

Saturday The News & Courier/The Evening Post, Charleston, S.C., March 9, 1985 15-A

Executive Register

85- 1139

## Reliving a Cambodian experience...

A Charleston resident paid a visit to the cinema recently to see the award-winning film "The Killing Fields" and was transported back in time to the two years he spent in Cambodia before the genocidal Khmer Rouge ravaged the country. Jerry M. Jackis, a former U.S. AID official, writes about his experience.

## U.S. failure led to the Cambodia 'killing fields'

By JERRY M. JACKIS

Upon viewing the film "The Killing Fields" dealing with the tragic holocaust of Cambodia, I could not help but think of the two years I spent there from 1957 to 1959 while serving as an investigator for the Agency for International Development. At that time, under the reign of Prince Norodom Sihanouk, Cambodia was at peace. However, winds of change were beginning to stir, with the communists on the one hand vying with the Free World for domination of, not only Cambodia, but all of Southeast Asia.

I have to agree with Sydney Schanberg of The New York Times in the film that the "secret" bombing of Cambodia was directly responsible for triggering the insanity and, consequently, precipitating the murderous struggle between the communist Khmer Rouge and the Cambodian government for the very soul of Cambodia. But this explains only part of the tragic situation, because it does not go back far enough in history to eventually tell us what happened in Cambodia.

Back in 1957, Cambodia was a plum ready to be picked by either side. Some 200 Americans were stationed in the capital of Phnom Penh and working for the U.S. government in various capacities for the State Department, Central Intelligence Agency and the AID. We Americans had a golden opportunity to win the hearts and minds of the Cambodian government and, more importantly, the Cambodian people. That we failed to do so is a historical fact. In the ideological struggle we were found wanting and consequently, lost Cambodia to the other side, thus bequeathing the mostly innocent Cambodian people unspeakable horror, destruction and death.

How did we allow this tragic situation to come about? Simply put, it came about because the Americans did not give one hoot for Cambodia or its people. From personal observation, I found most Americans spending their time indulging in mundane pursuits, as opposed to the struggle to keep Cambodia from turning to communism. The atmosphere at the United States Embassy was one of nonchalance and business as usual, with an utter lack of urgency. The foremost priorities prevailing among the employees were partying in the evening and playing office politics during the day. Shopping for bargains at the local market was pursued passionately and complaints aimed at the lack of U.S. commodities at the commissary were often aired disgustedly. Vacationing in Bangkok, Manila and Hong Kong were a must and the competition for housing, china, and silver, fierce. Job security was guarded jealously, and one's bank deposits, the main ingredient for being in Cambodia in the first instance, were closely watched. Delay in one's automobile arriving late from the United States would stir arguments in the general services office.

Is there any wonder in this atmosphere of self-indulgence that the Cambodians realized that the Americans were not the kind of people they wanted to emulate, or even support? Instead of winning friends with our generous economic, cultural and military aid, as was our intent, the Cambodians lost heart with the Americans and turned to the other side. And who could blame them? What they eventually got, though, was more than they had bargained for.

The movie vividly depicts the horror that followed our departure, but the root of the whole sad matter lies in the failures of the State Department, the CIA and the AID officials who failed miserably to do the job that they were supposed to do, i.e. keep Cambodia in the Free World. For shame, for shame.

Mr. Jackis, who is a Citadel graduate and has retired to his native Charleston after teaching English at university level in Korea, spent 20 years in government service, six of them in the Far East.

## Cartoons of the week

